

AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND
LIBRARY

ANNUAL REPORT

OF

DELAWARE COMMISSION

FOR THE BLIND

305 W. EIGHTH STREET

WILMINGTON, DELAWARE



AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND
LIBRARY

FOR

FISCAL YEAR

JULY 1, 1956 TO JUNE 30, 1957

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FOREWORD

It is our hope that the following report will bring to the general public an appreciation of the capabilities of blind people, of their intrinsic worth as individuals, and an understanding of the fact that except for the accident of blindness, they in no way differ from their fellow human beings.

This year has seen several important changes in our programs of service. First and foremost, our fine new vacation center, Landis Lodge, was opened near the Cedars, bringing much pleasure to the blind guests who were with us, and presaging even greater things for the future. The services of volunteers, fine devoted people, were used at Landis Lodge this season to a greater extent than we have ever used them in the past with our summer guests. Contact with garden clubs of the area has resulted in plans for beautification of the grounds, and new equipment and renovations indicated by this year's experience will be provided as soon as possible, in line with our long-term program for the Lodge.

State and federal funds have been granted us for the first time to enable us to pay for eye operations and certain prosthesis, as required, for such of our clients as cannot pay for them from their own resources. A medical consultant has been added to our staff to guide us in this area.

Another distinct mark of progress is the elimination of the ceiling on grants in aid to the financially needy blind of the State. Henceforward, ceilings will be raised (or lowered) in accordance with the amount of funds available at any given time.

But most of all, we have improved the quality of our staff by the employment of qualified and devoted workers in the fields of rehabilitation, home teaching, social service and workshop. Also we have been honored by the appointment to our Commission of Mrs. James R. Morford, a distinguished Delawarean, who has already demonstrated deep interest in the well-being of the handicapped. Our relations with sister organizations have grown ever better and, particularly, have we availed ourselves more than ever before of the fine cooperation of the Governor's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped and of the Welfare Council, notably its volunteers' service. The cooperative arrangement with the Wilmington City Schools for the education of eight little blind first-graders has worked out admirably, so well indeed, that a new set of Sunnysbrook graduates will be taken into a public school class in September. These two classes for the blind will, during the 1957-8 school year, be housed in the Lore School.

But if our year was for the most part a bright one, it was saddened by the passing of a devoted Commissioner, Herbert B. Mearns, who had worked for us and with us for thirty-five years. His unobtrusive but effective support will long be missed.

Our thanks for the guidance and support of Governor Boggs and the Legislature, for the loyalty of an effective staff, and for the helpfulness of individuals and agencies who worked with us for the alleviation of the burden of blindness.

DELAWARE COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

MEMBERS	RESIDENCE
Mrs. Jessie C. Wilson, <i>Chairman</i> Dover
Mrs. Irene duPont, <i>Honorary Chairman</i> ...	Granogue
J. Francis Blaine, <i>Secy. & Asst. Treas.</i>	Wilmington
Herbert B. Mearns, <i>Treasurer*</i>	Wilmington
Emil R. Mayerberg, M.D.	Westover Hills
Mrs. James R. Morford Cedars
Mrs. Caleb M. Wright	Georgetown
Francis J. Cummings, Ph.D., <i>Exec. Secy.</i>	. Carrcroft

OPHTHALMOLOGICAL CONSULTANT

Dr. Emil R. Mayerberg

COMMISSION MEETINGS

Regular Commission meetings are held monthly with the exception of the summer months of June, July, August and September. Special meetings are held whenever called. The annual meeting, during which officers are elected, is held in October. Meetings are held at the Commission headquarters unless otherwise specified.

PRINCIPAL OFFICE

305 W. Eighth Street, Wilmington, Delaware
F. J. CUMMINGS, Ph.D., *Executive Secretary*

*Deceased May, 1957

DEFINITION OF BLINDNESS

"Blind person" means one who is totally blind or has visual acuity of not more than 20/200 in the better eye with best correction, or whose vision is limited in field so that the widest diameter subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees.

MANDATORY REPORTING

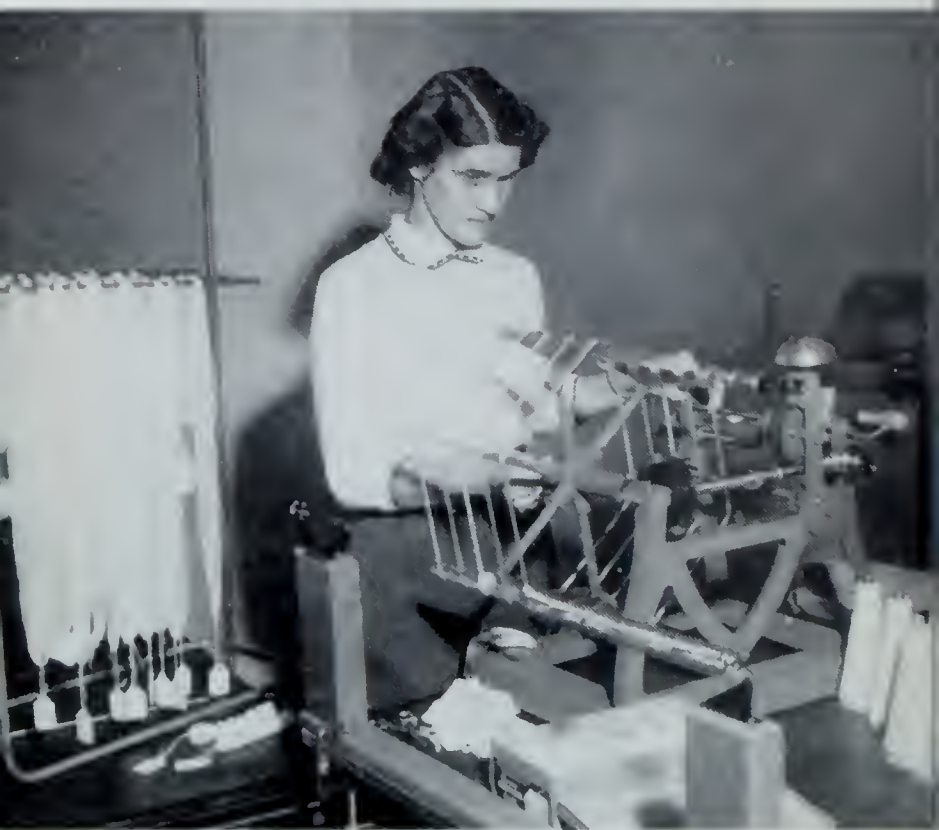
The laws of the State of Delaware (Title 31, Section 2109) require that every health and social agency, attending or consulting physician, or nurse, shall report to the Delaware Commission for the Blind, in writing, the name, age and residence of persons who are blind within the definition of blindness as indicated above and in such cases shall furnish such additional information as the Commission requests for registration or prevention of blindness.



Dictaphone typist placed through the
Vocational Rehabilitation Division.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

In the course of administering a vocational rehabilitation plan in the State of Delaware, the Commission for the Blind is attempting, by all means at its disposal, to remove the names of visually handicapped persons from welfare rolls to well established positions on personnel rolls. Through the media of medical and ophthalmological examinations, effective planning to achieve the utmost in client participation, along



Preparing samples of ban-lon yarn for Joseph Bancroft & Sons.

with training periods under sheltered conditions during which dexterity and good work habits may be developed, the Commission is trying to produce the most salable placement material possible. In some cases the aid of outside institutions will be sought for training purposes. In other instances, employers will agree to hire a client with an eye to giving him on the job training. Such training projects may be financed by this agency if necessary. It is this training aspect of rehabilitation which is becoming most crucial. The aptitudes, abilities and interests of the blind must be determined and developed if at all possible through testing and training respectively, if vocational rehabilitation is to do its best job.

The following is an outline of rehabilitated cases during the fiscal year.

Housewife	2
Physical Restoration	2
Sheltered Workshop	1
Placed in Gainful Employment	12

BUSINESS ENTERPRISES PROGRAM

The Commission for the Blind has been designated by the Federal government as a licensing agency for the State's business enterprises program.

The responsibility of this program is to seek and maintain employment opportunities for visually handicapped individuals



Employee's Cafeteria in merchandising store.

who are able to work but unable to find outside employment. The Commission for the Blind maintains an adequate staff of trained personnel to assist in the proper methods of salesmanship, merchandising, housekeeping, public relations, etc. This is a non-profit program, the net proceeds of which accrue to the operators in the form of weekly salary and periodic distribution.

The business enterprises program for the blind establishes and operates vending stands, snack bars and cafeterias in public and private buildings, factories and other suitable locations. These stands provide a valuable service to the public and to the employees of the companies in which they are located by serving hot and cold sandwiches, platters, hot and cold beverages, pastries, ice cream, etc. Thus, management is relieved of the problem of providing luncheon service for their employees and deserving blind persons are given a source of livelihood.

The vending stand department operates 18 units throughout the State, employing 18 full time operators and one relief operator. Plans have already been formulated for two new stands which will be in operation during the next fiscal year.

Gross income of all stands	\$386,418.46
Salaries, bonuses, etc. paid to blind operators	67,306.56
Salaries, bonuses, etc. paid to sighted assistants	55,197.92
Average annual salary received by blind operators ..	3,638.19
Average weekly salary received by blind operators ...	69.96



A busy scene in our modern workshop.

WORKSHOP

During the past fiscal year several improvements and additions were made in shop equipment.

A press and wire bender were constructed and set up for manufacture of strip rubber mats.

New equipment was constructed to facilitate production of link rubber mats.

New equipment was both purchased and constructed in shop for use in the manufacture of plastic link mats in quantity as this item is in considerable demand.

A sewing machine was purchased and set up to manufacture ironing board covers and pads, etc.

Equipment was furnished by Joseph Bancroft & Sons on a long run basis for processing and packaging of ban-Ion samples for distribution by them to all parts of the world. Between February and June 30 some 34,489 samples were produced.

Subcontract work constitutes the greater part of our shop activity. The list of contracting companies includes the following:

DuPont Direct Mail Service
 Joseph Bancroft & Sons
 Hercules Powder Company
 Brandywine Fibre Company
 Cedar Tree Press

National Vulcanized Fibre Company
 Hambleton Printing Company
 International Latex Corp.
 Atlas Powder Company
 Delaware State Development Company
 Atlantis Advertising Company
 General Investment Research Company

Chair caning and rug weaving were carried on as well as production of rubber link mats and the new plastic link mats.

<u>TYPE OF WORK</u>	<u>EMPLOYEE EARNINGS</u>
Tag stringing	\$ 492.87
Swatches and cards assembly	2,218.74
Urethane samples	381.35
Ban-lon samples	1,564.28
Key chains assembled	813.90
Pieces gauged	70.63
Enclosures	205.26
Boxes stickered	86.20
Calendars rolled	28.20
Bulletins collated	178.11
Hours collating	176.25
<hr/>	
Total subcontract work	\$ 6,215.79
Caning labor	\$2,678.82
Weaving labor	75.20
Mats labor	1,001.41
<hr/>	
Total workshop earnings	\$10,071.22

FINANCIAL AID TO THE NEEDY BLIND

The Commission for the Blind is the state agency authorized to administer that form of Public Assistance known as Aid to the Blind. This is a money grant made to a legally blind resident of Delaware who is in need according to standards determined by the Commission. The program is financed by state and federal funds and operates within a framework of regulations developed jointly by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare through its regional representatives and the Agency. The purpose of Aid to the Blind is to enable the recipient to provide himself with the necessities of life which he would not have without it; so it can not be thought of as a "pension" in any sense of the word since it is granted on the basis of financial need alone. As in all types of Public Assistance, any person may apply for Aid to the Blind and, if he meets the eligibility requirements, will receive a grant of from \$5.00 to \$85.00 a month for as long as he remains eligible. A recipient of Aid is eligible for all other services of the Agency, but not for any other form of Public Assistance.

During the past fiscal year 67 applications were received, of which 46 were eligible for assistance. The total number of persons receiving Aid to the Blind increased from 217 receiving an average grant of \$63.82 in July of 1956 to 234 receiving an average grant of \$70.91 in June of 1957. The largest number of applications received in any one month was 9, and the lowest 5, and 32 cases were closed during the year for various reasons such as death, improved vision, increased income from other sources, etc.

The increase in average grant was due to a liberalization of standards which was necessary in view of the rise in the cost of living; and the increase in case-load was due to many factors, the main one being the increase in population. Statistically, a certain per cent of a population will be blind, and the Agency had been concerned that its register of blind persons was not increasing in proportion to the total population; but it would now appear that this lag will shortly be non-existent.

SOCIAL SERVICE

All legally blind persons in Delaware are entitled to all services of the Commission for the Blind, and through its Social Service Department the Agency makes every effort to keep in touch with them. This is done by periodic personal contacts with the blind person and an evaluation of his needs, be these financial, personal, social or other. There are now 695 blind people known to the Agency, an increase of 25 in the year.

In the field of social service, Talking Book machines issued by the Library of Congress are made available to clients who want them, the Talking Books being furnished by the Philadelphia Free Library. At the close of the 1956 fiscal year, 100 Talking Book Machines were in use. Repair and maintenance service on the machines is also furnished.

Volunteers, obtained mainly through the Volunteer Bureau of the Welfare Council, are procured by the Agency for services such as reading, driving, clerical work, etc. to blind clients or blind workers of the Commission. These devoted people contribute greatly to the efficiency of the entire program.

DISABILITY DETERMINATIONS

The Social Service Department is currently processing applications for Disability Benefits for the Bureau of Old Age and Survivors' Insurance of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, on all applicants who claim a visual disability.

During the past year determinations have been made on 20 cases. Although relatively small in number, this activity has been a source of new clients as all who are legally blind according to the Delaware Code, are added to the Commission's register. A large majority of these applicants are new to the Agency and interested in the services it has to offer.

PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS

Sight Saving Month, September, 1956, was observed as usual by the Agency with the cooperation of various local officials, radio and TV stations and the press; closely allied to the National program which reached Delaware via the nationwide coverage in all public communications media. Enquiries were received all through the year from persons needing information, advice or financial help with visual problems.

Contact has been established with the Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc., a new project of that organization whereby eye care can be had for any person in need. So far, no Delawarean has been referred to this group. In the rare instance

where the Agency might be hampered, financially or otherwise, it is felt the Knights might be very helpful.

The Ophthalmologists, Medical Doctors, Optometrists, Hospitals and Clinics have given graciously and generously of time and talent in cooperating to furnish the best possible eye care, especially to the indigent of the State. Without definite knowledge to the contrary, Delaware's program in this field can scarcely be surpassed since no conceivable need cannot be met one way or another. Service organizations, notably the Lions Clubs, have been most helpful, responding immediately to every appeal. The knowledge that help is available makes the work doubly rewarding.

There have been three persons known to have had vision restored to the point where they are no longer legally blind. No doubt there were others who were not known to the Agency. No figure is available for the number whose loss of vision was arrested by care and treatment; Agency responsibility here being to encourage the client to report for treatment, follow prescriptions, and often helping him to make necessary arrangements to get to his doctor or clinic. This can be a time-consuming and frustrating undertaking, but is one for which all workers cheerfully make themselves responsible.

The prevention of blindness and conservation of sight are services which go on constantly in all departments, and cannot always be separated from another service being given.

EDUCATION

NURSERY SCHOOL

During the past fiscal year 12 children between the ages of three and six attended the Sunnybrook Nursery School for the pre-school blind. Our objectives are teaching the children to play independently and with others, conversing with classmates and with teachers, coordinating of muscular control at play and at work, building with blocks, using modeling clay, stringing beads, working with puzzles, climbing, and many others.

During the past fiscal year:

- 9 boys and girls attended Sunnybrook regularly
- 6 children completed their training at Sunnybrook
- 33 preschool children were served by the staff
- 9 referrals were made for services
- 70 home visits were made by the staff

The staff of Sunnybrook has worked very closely with the Parents Association, contributing to the development of a good parent-child relationship.

We would like to express the appreciation of the Commission to the several volunteers who assisted with our program, and who gave generously of their valuable time and talents.



A group of happy youngsters at Sunnybrook Nursery School.

PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND ADVANCED EDUCATION

In September, 1956 a first-grade braille class for blind children was established at the Highlands School in Wilmington on a two year experimental basis, under the auspices of the Wilmington City Schools. Other school-age blind children were sent at State expense to residential schools outside the State. During the past school year

- 15 children attended the Maryland School for the Blind, Overlea, Md.
- 4 children attended the Royer-Greaves School for the Blind, Paoli, Penna.
- 1 child attended the Woods School, Langhorne, Pa.
- 2 children attended the Kutner School, Wilmington, Del.
- 2 children attended the John G. Leach School, Wilmington, Del.
- 15 children were aided in their public and private school programs by the cooperative relationship established between the schools and the Commission for the Blind.

RECREATION

During the past year the recreation committee of the Commission planned and carried out a varied program of activities for the blind clients of Delaware. One trip was made by 11 blind clients and guests to Connie Mack Stadium in Phila-

delphia to see the Phillies play the St. Louis Cardinals. Unfortunately, the Phillies lost, but the entire group had an excellent time and a wonderful outing. Radios were carried and the blind persons present received a running commentary from the radio announcers and from the volunteer drivers and guides who accompanied them. The feeling of the crowd and the excitement of the game will long be remembered.

Two deep sea fishing trips were made from the Indian River Inlet with 8 blind persons and a guide going on each trip. Needless to say the blind enjoyed the boat ride on the ocean tremendously and were just as excited as any other fisherman when they did land a few fish. The first trip was composed of a group from the Wilmington area, but on the second trip blind fishermen were picked up on the way down in Middletown, Smyrna and Dover. The trips were enjoyed thoroughly.

Last year Wilmington was the proud possessor of two teams in the Interstate Blind Bowler's League. For some time past we have had one team, but interest has increased to the extent that it was necessary to expand to include a second team. Games are played each week, alternately at home and away, between the Wilmington teams and the six other teams in the League in the Philadelphia area. Scores are kept and prizes awarded at the end of the season at an annual banquet. The spirit of competition is keen, the sportsmanship is rewarding, and the social contacts made are tremendous morale boosters as well, of inestimable value in the participants' later life.

The annual Christmas party was given for the blind of the Wilmington area again this past year at the Highlands School. Over 150 persons attended to enjoy a well-planned program of entertainment, after which refreshments were served. Special recognition should be given here to the Wilmington Lions Club who provided transportation where needed.

LANDIS LODGE

Our new vacation center for the blind, Landis Lodge, 2915 Newport Gap Pike, Cedars, Delaware, opened as scheduled on June 17, with a group of women as our first guests. The fine new setup provided entirely by private donations justified our most optimistic hopes, and the reactions of the first happy group confirmed them. Expanded facilities have brought about somewhat greater requirements in the matter of staff, met by the addition of one paid worker and several volunteers.

Seventy-two blind people from all parts of the State accepted our invitation to enjoy the two weeks stay at Landis Lodge this summer without any cost whatsoever to them.

Interested groups and individuals graciously consented to brighten the vacation of Landis Lodge guests by friendly visits, entertainments, refreshments, etc. Each Sunday a clergyman conducted a Sabbath service for those who cared to attend. Others who wished to attend their own particular church were provided with escorts.

MISCELLANEOUS

The Commission serves as Delaware's clearing house for all matters pertaining to work for the blind. Blind people, their families, or groups interested in the welfare of the blind may secure through the Commission information about the work for the blind anywhere. Also, the Commission acts as middleman in the securing for blind Delawareans of free radios, braille-transcription service, railroad and bus travel concessions, movie passes, special appliances for the blind including braille watches, braille cooking timers, etc., white canes and other devices calculated to reduce for the blind person the difficulty of living independently. A display of special appliances for the blind may be seen at the Commission headquarters.

REGISTRATION OF SOLICITORS

The Commission is given the responsibility of licensing agencies or individuals outside Delaware who wish to solicit funds in Delaware for the welfare of blind people. The following Agencies have been given permits:

American Foundation for the Blind

15 W. 16th Street, New York 11, N.Y.

American Foundation for Overseas Blind

22 W. 17th Street, New York 11, N.Y.

American Printing House for the Blind

1839 Frankfort Ave., Louisville 6, Ky.

Blind Artists Concerts

34 S. 17th St., Philadelphia, Pa.

Christian Record Benevolent Association, Inc.

3705 S. 48th Street, Lincoln 6, Nebraska

Any other non-Delaware agency or individual soliciting funds in Delaware purportedly for the benefit of the blind is doing so in opposition to State law.

STATE USE BILL

Under the terms of Revised Code of Delaware, Title 31, Section 2115, State Agencies are required to purchase goods and services from the Delaware Commission for the Blind, when such goods and services are equal in quality and price with those available through normal channels. An excellent working relationship has been established by the Commission with most State Agencies.

DELAWARE COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

FINANCIAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 1957

STATE FUNDS	RECEIVED	EXPENDED
Salaries	\$ 57,500.00	\$ 57,500.00
Office Expense	1,571.61	1,571.61
Travel	4,415.98	4,415.98
Operations	18,000.00	18,000.00
Material	9,000.00	9,000.00
Repairs and Replacements	5,400.00	5,400.00
Assistance Grants	78,645.30	78,645.30
Education	29,308.71	29,308.71
Assistance Grants	7,046.00	7,046.00
Education	12,000.00	12,000.00
TOTAL	\$222,887.60	\$222,887.60

FEDERAL VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION FUNDS

Federal Appropriations	\$ 41,218.00	
Refunds and Reimbursements	354.83	
Administration		\$ 6,316.83
Vocational Guidance & Placement		18,678.62
Case Service		8,757.31
Specialized Facilities		7,820.07
TOTAL	\$ 41,572.83	\$ 41,572.83

FEDERAL AID TO THE BLIND FUNDS

Balance 7-1-56	\$ 11,574.49	
Federal Appropriations	102,004.45	
Refunds and Reimbursements	792.54	
Administration		\$ 11,808.13
Assistance Grants		98,145.57
TOTAL	\$114,371.48	\$109,953.70

FEDERAL OLD AGE & SURVIVORS INSURANCE FUNDS

Balance 7-1-56	\$ 395.12	
Federal Appropriations	258.44	
Administration		543.64
TOTAL	\$ 653.56	\$ 543.64

BALANCES JUNE 30, 1957

Federal Aid to the Blind Funds		\$ 4,417.78
Federal Old Age & Surv. Ins. Funds ...		109.92
TOTAL STATE & FEDERAL FUNDS	\$379,485.47	\$379,485.47

